

## **All healthcare facilities should follow the infection control guidance in the section Basic Infection Control Principles for Preventing the Spread of Pandemic Influenza in Healthcare Settings**

**The following guidance is intended to address setting-specific infection control issues that should also be considered.**

### **Outpatient medical offices**

Patients with nonemergency symptoms of an influenza-like illness may seek care from their medical provider. Implementation of infection control measures when these patients present for care will help prevent exposure among other patients and clinical and nonclinical office staff.

#### **a) Detection of patients with possible pandemic influenza**

- Post visual alerts (in appropriate languages) at the entrance to outpatient offices instructing persons with respiratory symptoms (e.g., patients, persons who accompany them) to:
  - Inform reception and healthcare personnel when they first register for care
  - Practice respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette (see [www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm))Sample visual alerts may be found on CDC's SARS website:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/INFECT/RespiratoryPoster.pdf>
- Triage patients calling for medical appointments for influenza symptoms:
  - Discourage unnecessary visits to medical facilities.
  - Instruct symptomatic patients on infection control measures to limit transmission in the home and when traveling to necessary medical appointments.

#### **b) "Source control" measures**

- Post signs that promote cough etiquette in common areas (e.g., elevators, waiting areas, cafeterias, lavatories) where they can serve as reminders to all persons in the healthcare facility. Signs should instruct persons to:
  - Cover the nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing.
  - Use tissues to contain respiratory secretions.
  - Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle after use.
  - Perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions.
- Facilitate adherence to respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette. Ensure the availability of materials in waiting areas for patients and visitors.
  - Provide tissues and no-touch receptacles (e.g., waste containers with pedal-operated lid or uncovered waste container) for used tissue disposal.
  - Provide conveniently located dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub.
  - Provide soap and disposable towels for hand washing where sinks are available.
- Promote the use of procedure or surgical masks and spatial separation by persons with symptoms of influenza.
  - Offer and encourage the use of either procedure masks (i.e., with ear loops) or surgical masks (i.e., with ties or elastic) by symptomatic persons to limit dispersal of respiratory droplets.
  - Encourage coughing persons to sit at least 3 feet away from other persons in common waiting areas.

**c) Patient placement**

- Where possible, designate separate waiting areas for patients with symptoms of pandemic influenza. Place signs indicating the separate waiting areas.
- Place symptomatic patients in an evaluation room as soon as possible to limit their time in common waiting areas.